



Are You Looking Out for Number One? Data Privacy Day is January 28

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Media Contact: Jerad Albracht, 608-224-5007
Jim Dick, Communications Director, 608-224-5020

MADISON – In our highly digitized and networked society, personal data flows freely. What do you do to protect your privacy and manage your digital footprint?

On Data Privacy Day, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is asking consumers to consider the ways they share data online and how they can be vigilant in protecting it. Governor Scott Walker has issued a proclamation in recognition of this international educational effort to encourage consumers, schools and businesses to make protecting privacy and data a greater priority.

“The internet is a powerful and useful tool, but you shouldn’t venture online without taking some basic precautions,” said Sandy Chalmers, DATCP’s Division Administrator for Trade and Consumer Protection. “Checking your privacy settings is the first step, whether you’re on a social network, shopping online or reading your email.”

To tighten the security around your digital information:

- **Protect your devices.** Update the operating system and anti-virus software on your devices to target recent viruses and patch any holes that hackers can use to access your system. For added security, set your device to require regular password unlocks.
- **Use secure websites.** Before you enter personal or banking information into a website, make sure the URL starts with “https” rather than “http.” The “s” stands for secure.
- **Always keep your phone in a secure location.** Your smartphone and tablet contain a wealth of personal information like your contacts, messages and schedules. Know where your phone is at all times and keep it locked away in public.
- **Change your internet passwords frequently.** Use a long combination of numbers, letters and special characters.
- **Protect your email account.** Use a complex and unique password that is specific to your email account. Many websites send password update and account access emails to customers, so getting a hold of these emails could potentially give a hacker access to all of these online accounts.
- **Think before you post.** Adjust the privacy settings for your social media accounts to block your content from strangers. Remember that sensitive information such as names, birth dates and Social Security numbers posted to social media accounts can be used by scammers to steal your identity.
- **Think before you app.** Before downloading a mobile app, understand what information (your location, access to social networks, etc.) the app accesses to function.
- **Use caution on public networks.** If you are using a public Wi-Fi hotspot to connect to your personal accounts on a mobile device, limit the type of business you conduct and set your device to hide your password character entries.

For additional consumer information or to file a complaint, visit the Consumer Protection Bureau at datcp.wisconsin.gov, send an e-mail to datcp@datcp.wisconsin.gov or call the Consumer Information Hotline at 800-422-7128.

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